

## **Project Search Prevention RFTOP submitted Q&A**

**Question 1:** What is the definition for "Support/Consulting" under FTE Core/Person Years for US-based and Overseas, page 27?

**Response 1:** Project Director, Deputy Projector, Country/Regional Managers (if any), and other senior technical personnel are considered "technical/management" staff. All other personnel, including short-term consultants, middle/lower level technical staff, field implementation personnel, and administrative, financial, and technical support staff are considered "support/consulting" staff.

**Question 2:** The table on page 27 indicates that all US-based Level of Effort (LOE) is Core and all overseas-based LOE is Field Support. Therefore, are we to assume that all other costs that originate in the US are Core costs? For example a US-based staff travels to country X for technical assistance, would this travel be considered Core or Field support travel expense (for country X)? Or could such travel be covered by either funding mechanism, depending on the direct sponsor of the activity?

**Response 2:** Any costs related to core-funded activities should be applied to the core budget irrespective of where such activities take place. Any field-initiated tasks, including Mission-sponsored research utilization/capacity building activities, have to be covered through field support funds. Field initiated tasks may include travel from US-based staff.

**Question 3:** On page 25 under 2, Cost Proposal, it says Offerors shall submit their cost proposal in Microsoft Excel format with full access to all formulas and in the following Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) format, by country and by operating period as well as a summary for all countries and for the overall period of performance. We normally prepare our budgets by country where the costs originate. Does USAID want a budget by country where the cost originates or by country where the Field Support funds would come from or both?

**Response 3:** Budget calculations should be based on wherever the costs originate.

**Question 4:** Do we need to make sure in the cost proposal budget that FS funding does not exceed \$500,000 limitation for the countries listed on page 4 of the RFA?

**Response 4:** Yes, field support funding in the cost proposal should not exceed \$500,000/year for each of the 15 PEPFAR focus countries. Once the project is underway, field support in excess of \$500,000/year for any of the 15 focus countries will require approval by the Contracting Officer.

**Question 5:** What is the definition for Monitoring and Evaluation of public health programs that is referenced in the overview description of Key Personnel: Project Director and Deputy Project Director on page 18?

**Response 5:** Monitoring and Evaluation of public health programs is broadly defined to include any research, monitoring, or program evaluation activity that provides the means for - learning from program experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating program resources, and demonstrating program results.

**Question 6:** Please confirm that the balance of the Project Director's FTE (on page 18 states 30-50% FTE) can be available for a part-time US-based staff member. On page 27, US-based Technical/Management FTEs per year totals 6.0.

**Response 6:** Offerors shall choose a staffing structure (including key personnel) that best suits their proposed technical approach. USAID recommends a part-time Project Director and a full-time Deputy Project Director to increase cost efficiency. Offerors may propose any combination of other technical/managerial staffing based on their proposed technical and managerial approach as long as core technical/managerial staffing does not exceed 6.0 FTE/year.

**Question 7:** Can we split the position of Senior Advisor for analysis, utilization and dissemination to be covered by two people rather than one FTE?

**Response 7:** Yes.

**Question 8:** We note the RFTOP specifies that this TO is focused on prevention of sexual transmission of HIV. We interpret that to mean PMTCT services and prevention of transmission through breastfeeding are not in the scope of this project. Please confirm that is the case.

**Response 8:** That is right. PMTCT program research does not fall within the scope of this task order.

**Question 9:** Is there a minimum number of countries that are expected to be part of this project? In addition to the FTE specified on page 27 of the RFTOP, are there any additional assumptions that should inform offerors' budget preparations, for example: number of countries that will put field support into the mechanism per year; number and/or type of field activities per year?

**Response 9:** The number of countries per year that will use this task order for field support is unknown at this time. Therefore, in addition to the FTE table on page 27, offerors may use the following assumptions in preparing the field support portion of the cost proposal: Offerors should assume that for each of the five years of the task order, eight countries (most or all from Sub-Saharan Africa) will place field support into the task order, with two activities per country per year (e.g., one multi-year systematic program evaluation and one single-year small-scale study).

**Question 10:** Can offerors propose core staff that are field-based? In addition, can proposed field staff work in more than one region (e.g., be based in Southeast Asia but work in sub-Saharan Africa)?

**Response 10:** Offerors may propose core-funded staff that are field-based (i.e., hiring local staff instead of expatriates) if it helps capacity building and reduces cost. We have a preference that core-funded field-based staff are local hires. In addition, limited core funds can be used toward partial salary support of expatriate or third country national field staff in specific short-term (less than six months) global technical leadership efforts.

**Question 11:** Is there a preferred balance re budget between program and research activities.

**Response 11:** As indicated in the scope of work, task order activities would rarely involve implementation (service delivery) of prevention programs. The exception may be to develop, test, and evaluate a new model of service delivery. Most field support activities are anticipated to be evaluations of existing programs. Therefore, the cost proposal should mostly reflect program research, research utilization, and capacity building components.

**Question 12:** Please clarify whether CVs of key personnel should be 3 pages (as indicated on p. 22 of the RFTOP) or 4 pages (as indicated on p. 19 of the RFTOP).

Section IX. Instructions to Offerors, 1. Technical Proposal (pg. 19) states “Offerors must include resumes of proposed key personnel (four pages maximum per resume) and other proposed staff (three pages maximum per resume...).” Section B.1. Staffing and Management (pg. 22) states “Offerors should specify qualifications and abilities of proposed Key personnel relevant to successful implementation and include resumes for key candidates. Resumes should not exceed three pages in length...” Please clarify whether resumes for key personnel should be a maximum of three or four pages.

**Response 12:** CVs of key personnel should not exceed 3 pages.

**Question 13:** Is there a maximum budget per year that offerors should propose? Can you provide a ceiling for the central funding?

**Response 13:** No, please refer to Response 9 above and LOE levels on page 27.

**Question 14:** Section VIII. Personnel, A. Key Personnel (pg. 17) states that letters of commitment for key personnel should indicate the candidate’s “agreement to the compensation levels which correspond to the levels set forth in the cost proposal.” Please confirm that specific compensation figures should not be included in the letter?

**Response 14:** No, specific compensation levels for key personnel need not be included in the letter, but key personnel names and compensation levels should be shown in the cost proposal.

**Question 15:** Rather than submit resumes (three pages maximum) for up to four illustrative staff/consultants per each of the 34 technical areas of expertise listed on pages 23-24, may the Offeror instead submit biographical sketches to highlight relevant key skills of illustrative staff?

**Response 15:** Yes.

**Question 16:** Section IX. Instructions to Offerors. 1. Technical Proposal (pg. 19) requests that the Offeror submit “an electronic copy of the technical proposal in Microsoft Word 2003 format on CD and via email.” May the Offeror use Adobe Acrobat to submit items that require signature, such as the required letters of commitment for key personnel?

**Response 16:** The technical proposal narrative (30 pages) should be in Microsoft Word 2003 format. Any appendices, including letters of commitment requiring signatures, can be submitted in Adobe Acrobat format.

**Question 17:** On page 26, the RFTOP indicates that “Offerors should submit two (2) hard copies...” Please clarify if this should read one (1) original and two (2) hard copies or should it be one (1) original and one (1) hard copy?

**Response 17:** Please submit one (1) original hard copy of the cost proposal . The email and CD submission requirements for the cost proposal remain unchanged.

**Question 18:** For email and CD submission, may the Offeror use Adobe Acrobat to submit items that require signature, specifically certifications and USAID biodata forms? Per the RFTOP, Microsoft Excel would be used for budget spreadsheets, and Microsoft Word would be used for accompanying narrative.

**Response 18:** Documents requiring signatures such as certifications and biodata sheets may be submitted in Adobe Acrobat format. The other submission format requirements, as indicated in Response 16, are not changed.

**Question 19:** Page 27 of the RFTOP section on Cost Proposal Format states “c) A current resume and USAID bio data form, in sufficient detail to support the proposed Functional Labor Category, for all U.S. and professional non-U.S. personnel...” Please confirm that personnel resumes, which are a required component of the technical proposal, are not also required in the cost proposal submission.

**Response 19:** Resumes and CVs are not required in the cost proposal submission.

**Question 20:** Page 28 of the RFTOP section on Cost Proposal Format states “d) A certification of salary for all proposed CCN Direct Labor” must be provided by the Offeror. Please clarify what form and/or documentation is required to meet this request.

**Response 20:** CCN Direct Labor salary certification is not necessary unless the proposed individual is a key personnel, may be required elsewhere in the RFTOP, or the offeror believes it is important to offer.